



NICARB COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIATORS

Purpose

This framework outlines the core competencies required for effective mediation practice. It serves as a benchmark for training providers, coaches, assessors, and participants, ensuring alignment with course content and skills outcomes, and consistency with national and international best practices.

Competency Domains

The NICArb mediator competency framework is structured into **six key domains**, each containing defined competencies that a mediator should demonstrate by the end of the training programme.

1. Foundation Knowledge and Professional Standards

Competencies:

- Understand the principles, stages, and types of mediation.
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the legal and ethical context of mediation in Nigeria and globally.
 - Understand the role of a mediator vis-à-vis the parties and other stakeholders.
 - Adhere to NICArb's Code of Conduct and ethical standards for neutrals.
 - Maintain neutrality, independence, and confidentiality throughout the process.
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2. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Competencies:

- Exhibit active listening and summarising skills.
- Use appropriate questioning techniques (open, reflective, clarifying).
- Demonstrate empathy and emotional intelligence in managing parties' needs.
- Manage tone, body language, and non-verbal cues effectively.

- Maintain composure and control under pressure.
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3. Process Management

Competencies:

- Set the agenda and explain the mediation process clearly.
 - Structure and manage joint and private sessions effectively.
 - Facilitate orderly exchange of information and negotiation.
 - Manage time efficiently and adapt the process to suit the case dynamics.
 - Address procedural issues, impasse, and interruptions with skill and authority.
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4. Problem Solving and Option Generation

Competencies:

- Assist parties in identifying their interests and reframing positions.
 - Encourage brainstorming of creative and practical settlement options.
 - Help parties assess consequences, alternatives, and trade-offs.
 - Facilitate principled negotiation where appropriate.
 - Guide parties toward workable, durable, and mutually acceptable outcomes.
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5. Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity

Competencies:

- Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, social, economic, and religious diversity.
 - Understand and navigate power imbalances, including gender and status dynamics.
 - Tailor communication and engagement to suit parties' background and context.
 - Apply conflict sensitivity, particularly in community-based or multi-party disputes.
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6. Documentation and Closure

Competencies:

- Assist parties in articulating clear terms of settlement.
 - Ensure understanding, voluntariness, and durability of the agreement.
 - Record settlement terms accurately and in line with legal enforceability.
 - Conclude the process respectfully and with closure, regardless of outcome.
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Assessment and Application

- The framework forms the basis for **participant evaluation**, **coach feedback**, and **final assessment**.
- Trainers and assessors will evaluate participants based on **demonstrable application** of these competencies through simulations, role-plays, and written tasks.
- Trainers must integrate the framework throughout the course—from learning objectives to coaching moments and final evaluations.